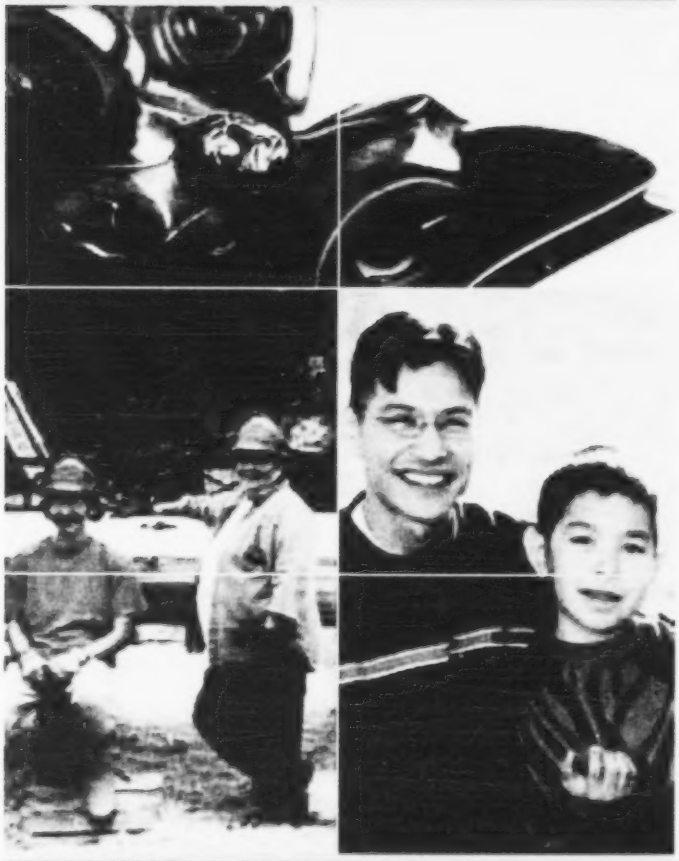
THE NEW RELATIONSHIP »
OPPORTUNITIES FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENTS



BRITISH COLUMBIA
The Best Place on Earth

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PREMIER'S MESSAGE

B.C. is building a New Relationship with Aboriginal people – one founded on mutual respect, reconciliation and recognition of Aboriginal rights and title.

New government-to-government relationships involve not only modern-day treaties with First Nations, but also new provincial and local agreements, processes and structures for shared decision-making about the use of land and resources.

It is truly an exciting time to be a British Columbian. Together, through our commitment to the New Relationship, we have embarked on a bold new venture that promises a future of greater socio-economic equality and opportunities for First Nations peoples.

All British Columbians can take pride in the progress of the New Relationship and the unprecedented advancements that are beginning to close gaps and shape a brighter future for everyone in our province.

Honourable Gordon Campbell
Premier of British Columbia

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BUILDING A NEW RELATIONSHIP

British Columbia is committed to building a New Relationship with First Nations based on mutual respect, reconciliation and recognition of Aboriginal rights and title.

Reconciliation is about local communities and industry working together with individual First Nations to build strong, workable relationships that will bring mutual benefits.

It is also about closing the socio-economic gaps that separate Aboriginal peoples from other British Columbians.

CLOSING THE GAP

Closing the socio-economic gap that exists between Aboriginal people and other British Columbians is a priority for the Province. Since 2005, the Province has been building a New Relationship with Aboriginal people. Working with First Nations leaders and Aboriginal organizations, the Province has launched a number of initiatives to materially improve the lives of Aboriginal people, including:

- Enacting the $100-million New Relationship Trust Act to help fund long-term capacity-building for First Nations.
- Signing the Education Jurisdiction Agreement recognizing the right of First Nations to make decisions about the education of their children.

- Signing Canada's first-ever Tripartite First Nations Health Plan, with the goal of improving the health and well-being of First Nations in British Columbia.
- Committing $6-million to the ActNow BC Aboriginal program to promote improving health and fitness of Aboriginal people.
- Implementing the Aboriginal Housing Initiative, a $50.9-million in Off-Reserve Aboriginal Housing Trust that will create 292 housing units in 10 communities across the province.

CELEBRATING SUCCESSES

Since 2005, the Ministry of Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation has committed $1.2 million to the Union of BC Municipalities and about 20 regional districts and municipalities to support local government participation in the treaty process.

In the past two years, considerable progress has been made towards greater understanding and reconciliation, not only at the treaty tables, but also through land use agreements and local protocols and agreements in such areas as watershed management, culture, heritage and economic development, and working relationships.

FOSTERING AGREEMENTS WITH LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

From Victoria to Alert Bay, and from Greater Vancouver to Fort Nelson, agreements are multiplying. Benefits include harmonious and productive relationships that lead to certainty and stability for long-term planning. Significant agreements include:

- A Community Accord on the relationship between Powell River and the Sliammon First Nation.
- A Protocol Agreement between the City of Nanaimo and the Snuneymuxw First Nation to provide a framework and timelines to resolve issues raised under their memorandum of understanding.

Several smaller but equally significant agreements cover matters as diverse as:

- Capacity building for self-government.
- Watershed and parks management.
- Wilderness trail development.
- Culture, heritage and economic development.
- Information technology sharing.

MOMENTUM IN ADVANCING THE TREATY PROCESS

With recent ratification votes, the treaty process has gained valuable momentum:

- The Tsawwassen First Nation ratified their final agreement on July 25, 2007.
- The Huu-ay-aht First Nation, one of five members of the Maa-nulth Treaty Society, ratified their final agreement on July 28, 2007. (The remaining four Maa-nulth First Nations vote in the fall of 2007.)
- Final agreements are getting closer with other First Nations, such as Yale and Sliammon.

TREATY BENEFITS

By the terms of their treaty, the Tsawwassen First Nation:

- Will become a member of the Greater Vancouver Regional District.
- May enter into local service agreements with the Greater Vancouver Water District.
- May enter service agreements with other local governments.
- Will become an independent and active participant in the local economy.

Similar opportunities exist for other local communities and neighbouring First Nations as the treaty process moves forward.

FACTS ABOUT B.C.'S ABORIGINAL PEOPLE

In British Columbia today, there are 165,800 Aboriginal people in total, comprising:

- 120,000 First Nations people in 198 bands.
- 45,000 people who identify themselves as Métis.
- 800 Inuit.

These Aboriginal people make up about 4.5% of the total provincial population.

Currently, there are 46 active treaty tables, where representatives of approximately half of the 198 bands, along with negotiators from the federal and provincial governments, are working towards agreement.

"Many local governments around the province are interested and engaged in working with neighbouring First Nations, and this funding will go to support programs that will educate, inform and build a greater understanding about developing healthy intergovernmental relationships."

Michael de Jong, Minister of Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation, announcing further funds supporting local governments and helping build their new relationships with First Nations, May 23, 2007.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Ministry of Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation
PO Box 9100, Stn Prov Govt, Victoria, BC V8W 9B1
Phone: 1 800 880-1022
Email: abrinfo@gov.bc.ca
www.gov.bc.ca/arr/

Service BC
(For information on any provincial government service or program)
Monday to Friday: 7:30 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.
Victoria: 250 387-6121
Vancouver: 604 660-2421
Toll-free provincewide: 1 800 663-7867
Telephone device for the deaf (TDD)
In Vancouver: 604 775-0303
Elsewhere in B.C.: 1 800 661-8773
www.servicebc.gov.bc.ca

USEFUL LINKS

Union of BC Indian Chiefs
www.ubcic.bc.ca

First Nations Summit
www.fns.bc.ca

BC Assembly of First Nations
http://bcafn.ca

Aboriginal Tourism Association of BC
www.atbc.bc.ca

Aboriginal Business and Entrepreneurial Skills Training (BEST)
www.smallbusinessconsultant.ca/best/

BC Chamber of Commerce
www.bcchamber.org/

First Peoples' Heritage, Language and Cultural Council
www.fphlcc.ca

First Peoples' Cultural Foundation
www.fpcf.ca

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